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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

WEEKLY SUMMARY

Special Report

Insurgency in Chad

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INSURGENCY IN CHAD

The Republic of Chad, a former French colony in central Africa, has been increasingly absorbed since 1965 in combating a Muslim-led insurgency in the eastern and northern parts of the country. This insurgency, rooted in ethnic and religious factors, has been fed by maladministration and oppressive taxation. Chad's Muslims, about half of the population of 3.5 million, regard with contempt the black Christianized and animist tribesmen of the south, particularly the Sara, who have dominated the government since Chad became independent in 1960.

At this time, the insurgency is still essentially on a minor scale. It is poorly organized and lacks arms, mass backing, and significant external support. Nevertheless, its continuing spread in recent years clearly demonstrates the inability of President Tombalbaye's government to deal with the problem. Last year, he called for massive new help from France, which responded by committing combat troops to an augmented counterinsurgency effort and by taking on an expanded military and administrative training role.

Although the dissidents have been stung by heavy losses in engagements with the French since last summer, the prospects for ending the insurgency are not bright. The rebels have not been crushed but are merely lying low, awaiting more favorable conditions. They are well aware that Paris, under domestic pressure to disengage, has announced its intention to begin a phase-out later this year.

ETHNIC AND HISTORIC ROOTS OF INSURGENCY

Chad's north-south split stems from a centuries old ethnic and cultural cleavage that has fostered enmity between the light-skinned and black Muslim peoples of the north and east, and the non-Muslim, black southern tribesmen. Many of the Muslims are nomadic herdsman who have traditionally defied any authority higher than their tribe or clan. These rugged tribesmen are noted for their warrior traditions. They not only engage in frequent squabbling among themselves but also war on sedentary peoples in their territory.

The Negroid tribesmen of the south, by contrast, have historically been much less bellicose.

Most of them are animist, although a few are Christianized. The people have long been sedentary cultivators and produce most of Chad's major crop, cotton.

For centuries before the arrival of the French in the late 1800s, the Muslims dominated and exploited the southerners. Even after the French conquest, dissension continued for years in eastern and northern Chad. Nevertheless, the French colonial period ended the Muslim monopoly on power and provided opportunities for the more adaptable southerners to prepare for political control at independence. This was particularly true in the fields of education and administration.

Since independence, the Muslim population has been further alienated by the exploitation of

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unscrupulous and inept government officials. Moreover, many of the southern administrators or prefects have been insensitive to the customs of the Muslims. For example, the hunting of big game is now outlawed in Ouaddai prefecture, where it was a major activity before independence. The hunters have been forced to turn to fishing, and even on that they are taxed. Furthermore, the Muslims resent the compulsory attendance of their children at state schools where they are taught French; they would prefer to send their children to Koranic schools, which tend to aggravate religious and cultural differences.

Until recently, President Tombalbaye paid little attention to the needs of the Muslims, whom he has long suspected of seeking to divide Chad into two separate states. Starting in 1963, after he had consolidated his power base, Tombalbaye ordered the arrest of many prominent Muslim politicians. Although he has subsequently released some of them, he has effectively limited their power. The Muslim elite—in common with all their countrymen—resent this restricted role in the normal political process. Educated Muslim youths especially resent the discrimination they experience in both the private and public sectors, where most of the important positions are filled by either foreigners or southerners.

In addition, President Tombalbaye has favored his native south with government largesse and with development projects. The east-central and northern prefectures suffer from a paucity of schools, public health centers, and other social projects for which there is a growing need.

DISSIDENCE IN EAST-CENTRAL CHAD

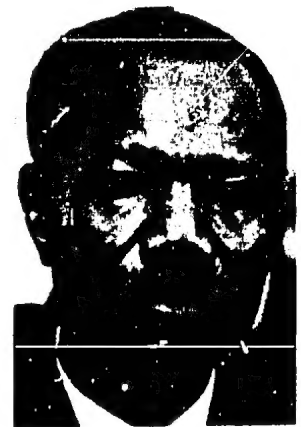
Overt Muslim dissidence was held in check during the first four years of independence by the presence of some 4,000 French troops. In 1965, however, the French withdrew the bulk of their

forces as part of a drastic cutback in Africa. Because Paris still considered Chad strategically important to the maintenance of its position south of the Sahara, a "strike force" of some 800 troops was kept on at Fort Lamy. A small number of other French military personnel remained to train Chadian troops.

Just four months after the departure of the French, active insurgency began. The initial outbreak occurred at Mangalmé, in Guera prefecture. From there, the dissidence spread steadily. It now affects an area of approximately 25,000 square miles, including parts of seven prefectures.

In 1969, French sources placed the total number of insurgents at about 2,700. Last month the French claimed to have killed some 1,200 dissidents over the previous nine months, but at least some of these losses have almost certainly been made up through new recruitment. The insurgents' arsenal is usually limited to what can be captured from government forces, but also includes some crude, homemade weapons such as spears, swords, and a varied assortment of guns. The ratio of guns to men is reportedly very low.

The rebels usually operate in small bands, using hit-and-run tactics against government outposts, small villages, convoys, and economic targets such as cotton-processing plants. They live off the land, operating from bases in the bush and in Sudan. Their activity tends to increase during the May-to-October rainy season, when government troops are hampered because the country's roads become impassable.



President Tombalbaye

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NORTHERN DISSIDENCE

As the insurgency spread in east-central Chad, the Tombalbaye government was further challenged by a separate source of opposition to its authority in the northern area, known as the "BET." The Muslim nomads of this area, especially the Toubous who roam on both sides of the border with Libya, had been the most difficult to pacify during the colonial period. After independence, the Toubous became infuriated when southern administrators sought to impose their authority over these fiercely independent people.

The Toubous are led by a derdei (sultan) who has been in self-imposed exile in Libya since 1966. Their most serious uprising so far extended from March to August 1968, during which there were a number of sharp clashes with government forces. On several occasions, both then and since, French troops have had to be called in to relieve hard-pressed government forces.

INSURGENT ORGANIZATIONS

The organization most frequently associated with Chad's dissidence is the National Liberation Front of Chad (FROLINA), an offshoot of a Muslim socialist party that was dissolved when Chad became a single-party state in 1962. FROLINA bands are most active in Guera, Batha, and Salamat prefectures, although in 1969 they were reported in four other east-central prefectures as well. Some FROLINA bands have been spotted within 150 miles of Fort Lamy.

FROLINA's leadership remains unclear, despite the frequent mention in the foreign press of Dr. Abba Siddick as its secretary general. Siddick is a former minister of education and was once a power in the ruling Chad Progressive Party. He reportedly split with Tombalbaye in 1963 and has since lived in exile, most recently in Libya. Al-

though he claims to speak for FROLINA, he seems to lack a significant following within the country. He has been away from Chadian politics too long and appears to be too old to appeal to the younger generation.

FROLINA's present field commander is El Hadj Issaka—until recently resident just over the border in Sudan. Issaka lacks the charisma of his more flamboyant predecessor, Ibrahim Abatcha, who was killed in battle two years ago, but he does seem to command the respect of the rebels. Although FROLINA remains a very loosely knit organization, Issaka appears to have set up a chain of command and to have appointed leaders over all the local rebel groups. Operational missions seem to be assigned only in a very general sense, however, leaving much to individual initiative. There is some evidence that locally collected money and captured arms are forwarded to Issaka's mobile headquarters for distribution among FROLINA bands.

FROLINA's over-all objectives are unclear. Spokesmen have called for "freedom, democracy, and progress" and for replacing the Tombalbaye regime with one more amenable to Muslim interests, but no mention has been made of secession. Essentially, FROLINA opposes non-Muslim authority in Muslim areas but does not seek to take over the government in Fort Lamy. The Muslims would probably like to live along traditional lines with a minimum of interference from any kind of authority, especially if it happens to be non-Muslim.

The only other organized insurgent group is the Chad Liberation Front. The Front has far fewer adherents than FROLINA and seems to operate mainly within the confines of Ouaddai prefecture. Past attempts to unify the two insurgent groups have been unsuccessful, and there have been reports of FROLINA attacks on partisans of the Front.

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EXTERNAL SUPPORT

Although the insurgents have long solicited help in the Arab world, foreign support has been minimal. Semi-independent Muslim sultanates in neighboring Sudan have furnished sanctuary and limited material support. Both insurgent organizations are known to have agents in Algiers, Khartoum, and Cairo for propaganda purposes, and to maintain contacts with potentially sympathetic governments. FROLINA has tried to obtain arms from various Arab states, from Cuba, and from the USSR, but there is no hard evidence that any of these countries has complied.

President Tombalbaye has become increasingly apprehensive about the intentions of his Arab neighbors. Relations with both Libya and Sudan had been warming, but since last year's extremist coups in these countries, there has been a noticeable chill. Early this year, the Libyans gratuitously offered to "mediate" between Tombalbaye's government and the rebels, and also to provide economic assistance if Chad would agree to adopt an anti-Israel stance. This was rejected by the Chadians, who considered the Libyan offer an unfriendly act. The French, in their current arms talks with the Libyans, have sought and received assurances that no Libyan aid will be given to the Chadian insurgents. Khartoum has reportedly made an offer similar to Libya's, but Sudan's internal problems will probably preclude any involvement beyond what little the rebels get from the semi-independent sultanates astride the border.

COUNTERINSURGENCY

Finally persuaded that the dissidence was becoming too difficult to handle alone, Tombalbaye last year swallowed his pride and reluctantly called on the French for large-scale help. Paris responded with a combined military-civil assistance mission, headed by a former colonial governor and a general. French troops began arriving in April 1969 and were sent to beleaguered Guera prefecture, where the French began a sizable build-up at Mongo. The actual combat mission was assigned to the largely veteran Foreign Legion, some 1,000 of whom are now in Chad. Support troops, including air force personnel, and the 800-man strike force at Fort Lamy, bring the total French military commitment close to 2,500 men.



Legionnaire cavalry

After their forces arrived, the French urged the Chadians to adopt a more offensive strategy, utilizing the greater French firepower and mobility to launch frequent search-and-destroy operations. The net effect has been a number of successful encounters for the government forces and a noticeable drop-off in rebel activity. French and Chadian combat units are integrated in the various tactical areas, and even the local prefect has a French military adviser. The French commander has assumed direct tactical and operational command of all forces, but has left Chadian General Doumro in administrative control of the Chad Army.

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Although the French have apparently had some success in curtailing the rebel menace, their secondary mission of retraining the Chadian Army will take considerably longer—at least until the summer of 1971, according to the French commander. He has pushed for the integration of French military instructors at all levels, and has set up joint staffs at both high and low echelons in the hope of increasing the training of Chadian officers.

On the administrative side, the French have been pressing Tombalbaye to make sweeping reforms in the government apparatus. In response, the President announced a series of measures last summer restoring some power to the traditional Muslim chiefs. He also urged his prefects to get closer to the people, and to assume more responsibility for local matters. Within the past few weeks, the President

has created a new commission for administrative reform headed by one of his ablest ministers.

Nevertheless, the French intervention has been irksome to some Chadian officers and administrators, particularly in the middle ranks. These men not only resent the dilution of their authority, but fear that their position and future may be threatened. Perhaps in response to these pressures, and to demonstrate Tombalbaye's desire to show a little less than total reliance on France, Chad has sent 350 men for military training in the Congo (Kinshasa). Tombalbaye has also

urged the Israelis to give more military support, and has sounded out the US as well.

The French involvement has become increasingly unpopular with French public opinion. This seems to have motivated Paris to announce a pullback, now set to begin next summer. French officials claim that this applies only to military forces, however, and that administrative reform personnel will remain indefinitely.

OTHER PROBLEMS

Opposition and discontent are not limited to Muslims. There are cabinet ministers, prefects, middle and lower level functionaries, and military officers who oppose one or another facet of Tombalbaye's policies. Chadian youth, especially students abroad in France and Belgium, are also irritating to the government. No evidence exists, however, that any of this opposition is organized.

Potentially, however, Tombalbaye's most dangerous critics are the country's youth. Young Chadians are increasingly impatient with the pace of change and methods of the government. In the past, the President has shrewdly muted this source of discontent by absorbing at least the more educated into the large bureaucracy. Recent



pursuing rebel group



Legionnaire with captured insurgent

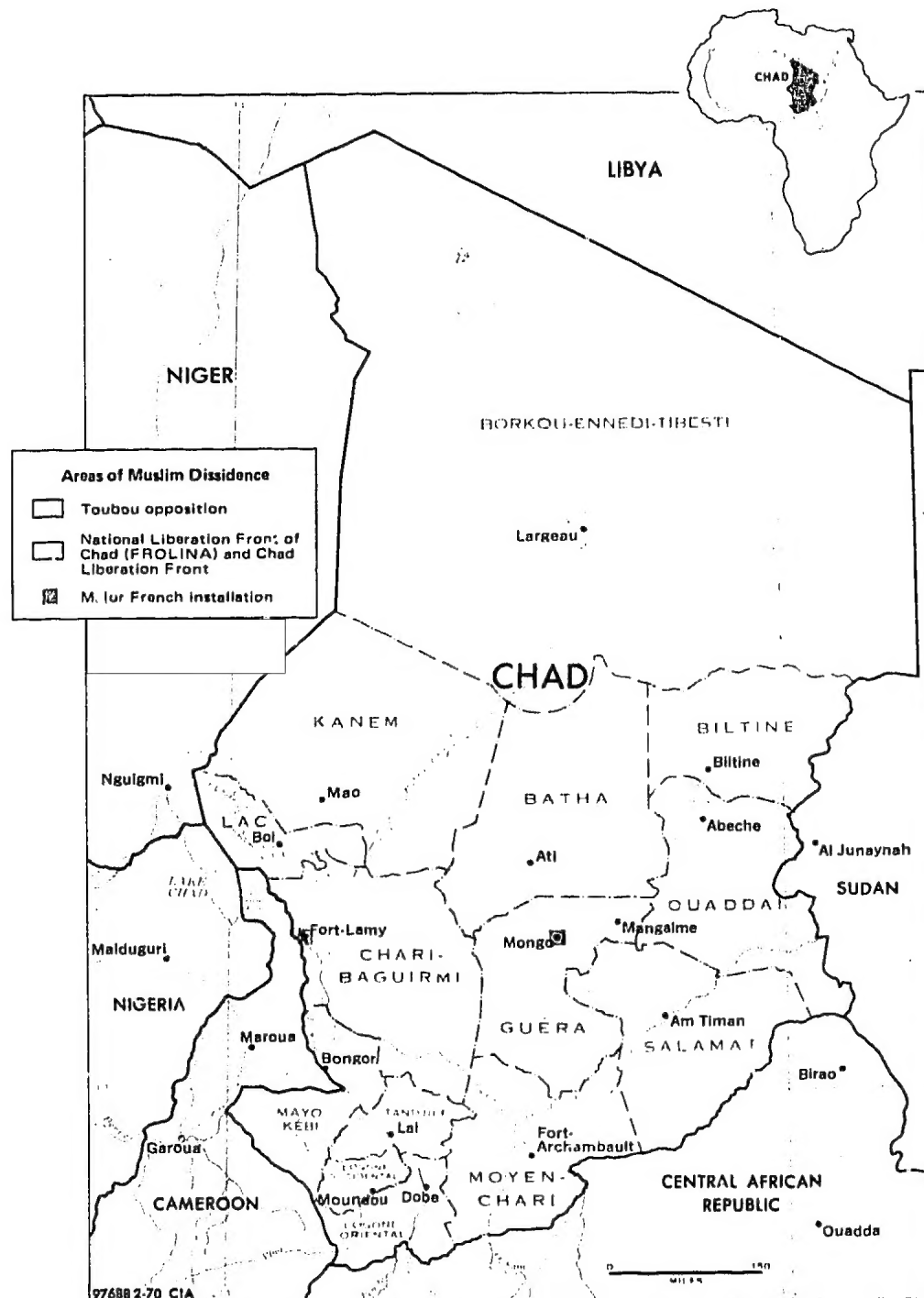
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budgetary pressures will force a cutback in government jobs, however, and, as job opportunities are very limited, this may lead to unrest among those who are forced to look elsewhere.

Many of Chad's younger civil servants are irked over the lingering French presence at virtually all levels of government. What they resent most is the patronizing attitude of these Frenchmen, many of whom were involved in France's African empire during the colonial period.

Economically, Chad is saddled with a primitive economy that lacks exploitable resources and is dependent on cotton for most of its foreign exchange. Even this crop has to be subsidized by the French to keep it competitive on the world market. Additionally, the maintenance of a large military force to combat the insurgents absorbs about one third of the budget, which in the past has relied on French subsidies. Paris is under economic stress itself, however, which has forced it to cut back somewhat its African commitments. The Chadians have been seeking aid elsewhere, but the short-run economic picture offers little encouragement, and future development will at best be slow.

OUTLOOK

Militarily, the French intervention seems to have temporarily forestalled any serious threat from the rebels. The insurgents now venture out

only when virtually assured of success. Moreover, further training of the Chadian Army will apparently not be affected by the French cutback. Nevertheless, the current lull may just be part of a waiting game the insurgents are playing until the French troops withdraw. The rebels could well be using the time to improve their over-all organization and to seek more and better arms.

President Tombalbaye seems to have become convinced of the need for reform in the administrative structure. He also seems to be willing to pay more attention to the needs and aspirations of his people, both Muslim and non-Muslim. There are signs, however, that this may be too little and perhaps too late. No matter what its good intentions, the government is handicapped by a serious shortage of trained and dedicated cadres. Moreover, some services are likely to be reduced as the financially hard-pressed government is forced to cut back the present overgrown bureaucracy.

There is little indication that the festering ethnic and religious problems dividing the country will be brought closer to solution in the near future. There is, in fact, reason to believe that the French withdrawal may trigger renewed hostilities on an even greater scale. There seems to be no alternative to Tombalbaye, however, who still appears to be the major figure in Chad regardless of his tainted image among the Muslims.

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